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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EPET](#) [GB](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: PING TO BRIEF UNSG ON BOUNDARY DISPUTE WITH EG

REF: LIBREVILLE 167 AND PREV.

Classified By: DCM Katherine Dhanani. Reason: 1.4(b) & (d).

¶1. (C) Gabonese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Legal Advisor Michel Biang told DCM that he and Foreign Minister Jean Ping are traveling to New York this week to discuss the Gabon - Equatorial Guinea border dispute with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. Biang said that both EG President Obiang and the GREG Foreign Minister have met the new UNSG; the GoG fears this may have given him a distorted view of the matter. Biang also reported the GoG believes Ban Ki Moon wants

reassurance that the office of the UNSG, rather than Kofi Annan, was given the mandate to mediate. ForMin Ping will provide Gabon's perspective and express the GoG's continued interest in UN mediation. Ping may, however, express reservations about the current mediator (Canadian), who has told the GoG he expects to continue his work. Biang reiterated his personal view that Gabon should quit trying to seek a compromise solution, and instead should submit the dispute to the International Court of Justice. He said that President Bongo, however, much prefers a political solution.

¶2. (C) Biang told DCM that Gabon came close to declaring the First Secretary of the EG Embassy in Gabon persona non grata. The EG diplomat offered two Gabonese MFA employees 20 million cfa each (about \$41,000) to steal and deliver GoG documents on the dispute. Biang said Ping called in the EG Ambassador, and also used this incident, along with other matters, to fight GREG efforts to take over leadership of the BEAC (the central bank for the central African franc zone).

¶3. (C) Comment: Although Gabonese public interest in the border dispute has quieted in recent months, the matter remains a potential flash point for both Gabonese domestic politics and the Gabon-EG relationship. President Bongo is prone to seek a political solution to every question, but would be hard pressed to sell to the Gabonese people any compromise on the boundary that the GREG might accept. It is difficult to see how this dispute could be resolved unless an independent entity renders a binding legal decision.  
WALKLEY